

The Barrowmaze

Session 46 03-10-24 Barrows Wanderings

Next Session 10/10/24 19.00

Tuesday the 3rd day of Setherius, 11:30 outside Barrow 15.

Standing outside Barrow 15, all except Arnd and Shadwell are thoroughly soaked from fighting and splashing around in the flooded tomb below. They discuss how best to patch up poor Phineas who unluckily took several nasty wounds whilst bravely fighting Zombies. Much to her surprise Bella finds two healing potions in her backpack and suggests using these but Gerald decides to use his Laying on of Hands instead since Phineas is in quite bad shape and Gerald's holy cure is guaranteed to bring the stricken guard back to almost full health. A grateful Phineas quickly feels much better and thanking Gerald, suggests they go out and, "kill something 'orrible". Fenella opines that a rich "something 'orrible" would be best but in any event, soaking wet yet mostly cheerful they take the short walk to the southeast to examine Barrow 22.

Reme finds tracks around the entrance, boot marks from about one to two weeks ago. They descend in their usual cautious manner discovering a barrow that has been thoroughly plundered already, it's almost as if they'd visited it themselves.

Passing by the covered Barrow 23 they head further southeast to Barrow 24 which they efficiently break open. Fenella points out, "isn't there something about a quest to the northwest? If so, why are we going southeast?" Gerald points out that they have to find the key since he is so sure that the magically locked door to Barrow 7 is where they have to go to find The Pit of Chaos. Fenella asks, "but how do we know the key is in these barrows?" and the question remains on their minds for some time after. Perhaps they recall the ghost of Sir Guy's words, carefully noted by expedition scribe Shadwell, "The Pit is to the northwest in the Barrowmaze and you should seek it there". Perhaps Gerald also recalls Mazzahs' words explaining, "the orb will only work for about a month once activated by a bearer such as yourself". The Fount of Law was unearthed and claimed by Gerald on the 1st day of Setherius and it is now the 3rd day of that month.

The Guardians of Barrow 24

Dismissing these matters for now they concentrate on the job at hand and descend into Barrow 24. At the bottom is a heavy wooden door which Arnd opens after checking for traps. They find a 30 x 30 ft worked stone chamber with heavy tapestries in abstract earthy toned designs hanging from the walls, two to the north and one on the eastern wall. To the west a heavy wooden door bars the way. As they begin to search the chamber, the two northern tapestries fly open and four creatures of wood and thorns burst into the room and spring forward to attack. Fortunately, The Hammers are on their guard and act instantly. Gerald moves fast to intercept the Wood Golem menacing Fenella, striking and wounding it in a shower of twigs while smiling to himself at the thought that these are constructed Golems and thanks to the Fount of Law will therefore not be able to hit him in melee. Leo simply squares up to one of the Golems and utterly destroys it in a single blow from The Sword of Sir Chyde and the arm of Sir Leonidas. Reme strikes the third enemy wounding it, sending wood chips flying as Fenella steps back, unfortunately missing her spear thrust as she retreats.

Phineas and Arnd join the fray both wounding one of the three remaining Wood Golems as Morgaine hurls the Dagger of Throwing at one of the wounded Golems instantly converting it into a pile of twigs. As usual her amazing dagger flies back into her outstretched hand and laughing, she mocks the hapless constructs in her usual boisterous fashion. The two remaining Golems fight back, one of them just missing Phineas but the other unwisely attacks Gerald, the blow seemingly just sliding past its target as Gerald permits himself a holy smirk. In a surprising burst of speed the two remaining Golems swiftly try the same attacks again but of course Gerald is immune and Phineas dodges nimbly aside. Stepping almost casually over, Leo destroys another Golem, leaving just one which manages somehow to avoid strikes from Reme, Fenella and Phineas although Gerald adds a little to its woes with a slight wound. Chiding himself for below-par performance Gerald swings again and finishes the last Golem, decorating the floor with its arboreal remains.

Resuming their search, they look behind the tapestries finding only small box chambers, the third containing a pile of dead twigs and brambles which presumably were previously active guardians that had run out of enchantment.

Arnd examines the door finding it untrapped but locked. He tries to pick the lock and succeeds as everyone attempts to cover their surprise, opening the door onto a 30 x 40 ft room with a large altar and two statues at the northern end. Approaching cautiously they see resting upon the raised altar a human skull and an earthenware cup of a pleasing rustic design that immediately appeals to Fenella's artistic sensibilities, "quite bohemian in fact," she thinks picturing it on a shelf somewhere... perhaps next to the skull, it is Fenella after all. Gerald is very wary of the items and at first doesn't want to move them but as Leo and Reme examine the statues on either side of him he decides to lift the cup which causes both statues to animate as guardians which immediately attack. Gerald curses under his breath, he is not protected by the Fount from this type of Barrow Guardian.

Slicing with their stone swords the eerily impassive things attack Leo and Reme. Leo fends off his attack but Reme is hit and wounded. Leo somehow manages to miss the hulking great stone guardian right in front of him as Reme delivers a fine strike but recalling their previous fight with these things, there is a chance that the attacking weapon becomes stuck in the stone guardian's body, which is exactly what happens to Reme as Frost Brand is wrenched from his grip! Gerald jumps down from the altar to backup Reme but stumbles on landing and misses as Arnd gets in a quick stab with his Stoutblade Dagger. Phineas also joins the fight but misses his swing whilst Morgaine's dagger whistles through the air returning to her without a hit as Bella also misses!

It seems to be "missing season" for all in the barrows as both Barrow Guardians also miss their targets! Fenella has had enough of all this missing so casts a Faerie Fire spell on Reme's opponent lighting it up in an incandescent aura that makes it easier to hit. Leo lands a mighty blow on his Guardian but finds the Sword of Sir Chyde is wrenched out of his grip as the magical weapon cleaves deeply into stone and stays there! Following Gerald's shouted suggestion Reme switches to his bow since he has a small supply of magical arrows. Stepping over to the altar he shoots at the brightly illuminated Guardian but misses. Gerald has worked his way around the back of Reme's adversary and swinging mightily he carves a goodly wound and manages to hang onto the Black Iron Sword. Arnd misses but Phineas steps into the gap and raising his Magical Barrows Broadsword high, slices down destroying the Guardian!

On the other side of the room having lost the the use of his magical weapon Leo decides to lure the Guardian out into the centre of the room by backing away whilst defending himself. Fenella sneaks around the back of remaining Guardian but misses as it suddenly moves to pursue Leo, while up on the altar, Reme quickly turns and looses a magical arrow which thuds brutally into Leo's Guardian at point blank range doing extra damage. As the great stone figure advances on Leo, Gerald leaps the altar, landing in a naturally heroic pose and with a righteous sweep of the Black Iron Shortsword elegantly slices into the Guardian at the waist, causing it to crumble and collapse into a pile of misshapen stone at the Paladin's feet.

Reme and Leo retrieve their precious magical swords as Gerald and Fenella examine the cup. Inscribed on the bottom of the cup is the word "drinkingtime". Worried that it could be dangerous to try to use what appears to be a magical object, possibly triggered with a command word, Gerald has Shadwell stow the cup safely in The Bag of Holding. Since the skull is clearly just a skull they leave it where it is. They will consult Mazzahs about the cup and the Barrow 15 Gauntlets when they return to Helix.

With Barrow 24 explored they discuss whether to return to Helix or press on. Barrow 25 lies enticingly close to the southeast. Leo is keen to look at one more Barrow before calling it a day and Gerald is also enthusiastic although the thought of heading southeast rather than northwest does trouble him on some level. Fenella shrugs as she often does and Reme as usual is keen to go where there's a fight, so they make the short trip to Barrow 25, efficiently demolishing yet another stone seal.

Barrow 25

They descend into the Barrow entrance chamber which is a roughly hexagonal 30 x 30 ft room with four pillars supporting a vaulted ceiling. There are short 10 ft passageways to the west, north and east, all ending with stout wooden doors. The pillars glitter in the light due to the three beautiful gemstones inset into each pillar in an apparently random fashion. As they advance into the room Leo moves between the pillars but doesn't notice the slight change in resonance as he taps the floor with his sword. Stepping further he triggers the pit trap plunging 20 ft onto a grid of sharp metal spikes at the bottom of the pit. Pulling himself painfully off the spikes, he sees that he is not too badly damaged and his armour won't need too many repairs, perhaps a day or two in Helix? Gerald throws down the Gauntlets of Swimming and Climbing and as Leo uses them to safely climb out, Arnd sets about carefully removing the beautiful gemstones, each worth 200 gp for a total of 2,400 gp.

Turning their attention to the doors, they decide to try the western one first.

Tuesday the 3rd day of Setherius, 13:40 Barrow 25 Room 1.